

Friend and Pioneer

In Memory of Paul Kamer (1960–2020)

The Leibniz Institute for Catalysis mourns the death of Paul Kamer, an excellent researcher and university teacher, a pioneer in his field. His death deeply shocks us, his colleagues. Almost four years ago, Paul came to Rostock as a renowned chemist, and we were proud to have won him for LIKAT after successful stations in the USA, the Netherlands and Great Britain.



Prof. Paul C. J. Kamer (1960 – 2020)

With his expertise in biocatalysis and in the field of artificial metal-enzyme complexes, Paul Kamer opened a completely new field of expertise for LIKAT. LIKAT established a research area specifically for his research: "Bioinspired Homogeneous & Heterogeneous Catalysis". Already as a postdoc, Paul Kamer investigated, among other things, molecular processes of DNA synthesis, and even then, as he once recounted, he had been fascinated by the similarities with chemical catalysis.

Paul Kamer was born and spent his childhood in Hilversum, a municipality in North Holland. Throughout his life he remained connected to Hilversum, where his wife Gini lives with their two Labradors. After high school, he studied in Amsterdam, earned his PhD in Utrecht, went to Caltech in Pasadena as a postdoctoral fellow, and in 1990 returned to the University of Amsterdam - first as an assistant professor, later as an associate professor and professor. In 2005, Paul moved to the University of St Andrews, Scotland, to further develop his group in homogeneous catalysis.

In 2017, Paul Kamer left the British Isles for LIKAT, in his humorous way he once described himself as the first Brexit refugee. In Rostock, he immediately learned the German language, which, together with his warm, approachable nature, greatly facilitated his access to his new colleagues.

In 2019, Paul Kamer brought a coveted Leibniz Association Science Campus ComBioCat to Rostock at LIKAT. The aim is to make bio-, chemo- and photocatalysis usable for processes based on renewable raw materials, among other things. The structures are in place, the projects are underway - with opportunities for young researchers to make their mark in a promising field. With Paul Kamer, they have lost a motivating and inspiring teacher. But their work at the Leibniz Science Campus will also honor his work.

Paul Kamer's extraordinarily productive research was reflected in some 250 widely cited publications and a number of patents. He was co-editor of CATALYSIS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY and visiting professor at universities in Milan, Eindhoven, Taragona, Amsterdam and at Caltech. Paul Kamer's death tears a big gap in the life of our institute. We miss him as a colleague, as a friend and our sympathies go out to his wife Gini, his family, all his friends.

We remember him with honor.